

COMPLETE CRUISE IN OLD VIRGINIA

Great World-Circling Tour of the Fleet Is Nearing End.

RECORD MADE HAS ASTONISHED WORLD

Previously Arranged Schedule
from Port to Port Adhered to
Strictly, and in Matter of
Repairs Vessels Prac-
tically Cared for
Themselves.

LD POINT COMFORT, VA., February 14.—Half way across the Atlantic Ocean on the last long reach of their spectacular cruise around the world, the sixteen battleships of the United States Atlantic fleet are steaming to-day in leisurely fashion towards the anchorage ground of Hampton Roads, from whence they sailed just fourteen months ago. Dur-

the heavily armored fighting vessel have traveled approximately 45,000 miles, and are returning in condition still fit for "a frolic or a fight." The cruise has been a veritable expedition of the seven seas, and tasks heretofore deemed impossible for the modern ironclad have been accomplished with an ease bordering on the commonplace.

The stories of the cruise have been succeeding chapters of reception—banquets, balls and merrymaking, but back of all this relaxation and entertainment in the hospitable ports of the two hemispheres has been a test of men and material which has placed the American Navy in an enviable position before all the world.

The engine-room efficiency in the longer legs of the journey, developing

a new and unexpectedly wide steering radius for a battleship; the fact that it was possible to follow the motions of a battleship in the fleet, squadron and divisional manoeuvres, which came with constant experience at sea, and above all the marvelous records made at the targets in Magdalen and Manila Bays tell of the real work and the substantial accomplishments that

Schedule Adhered To.
The previously arranged schedule of the journeys from port to port has been adhered to in remarkable manner, except in two instances, when violent storms made rail speed to be dangerous and uncomfortable. To offset these lapses from punctuality

the fleet has made some of its longest runs two whole days ahead of time. None of the undertakings imposed upon the ships or the men has been too difficult. The cruise, however, was not inaugurated without serious misgivings at home and abroad. Victor M. Metcalf, of California, was Secretary of the Navy when the cruise began. After the

"When the purpose of giving this assemblage of battleships the privileges and advantages of a practical cruise was announced, criticisms from his technical quarters were heard. It was suggested that the undertaking was too monumental; that a battleship was too vast and complicated a piece

mechanism to send around the globe on any ordinary occasion; that danger more than multiplied with numbers; such a case; that disaster lurked on every submerged ledge and was born on every unknown tidal current; that the skeleton of some of the ships would doubtless be left in the Straits of Magellan; that, if the fleet should succeed in rounding South America, we, reasonably certain that the

individual ships would, one by one, arrive with machinery loose and almost unserviceable, with crews reflecting the demoralized condition of the material, and that a woeful spectacle of failure would thus be presented.

"As to the material, the cold fact is that the ships have practical taken care of their own repairs on the

That the experience gained on the cruise will be of unending benefit to the navy is indicated from the fact that probably one-half of the entire personnel of the naval establishment participated in the epoch-making trip. Three of the sixteen captains who sailed in command of vessels are re-

turning home as rear-admirals. Eight other captains are returning in command of the same ship on which they began the journey of the world. From rear-admiral down to midshipman the training has been such as no other naval cruise ever afforded. Among the enlisted men the training has been even more valuable. Landsmen shipped just before the start and utter

green in the ways of the deep, and coming home an integral part of a wonderful fleet efficiency, and local believers in all that the American navy stands for. Desertions on the trip have been few. The men have taken a pride in the cruise and will be a constant boast with the fact that they started to the west from Hampton Roads and came home with

They know the world is round, and they know what it is to work and play over 45,000 miles of the watered surface of the globe.

The Fleet's Commanders.

To Read-Admiral Charles S. Sperry, strict disciplinarian, a man of few words, but a recognized scholar and constant student of the higher arts

Rear-Admiral Robley D. Evans, now retired, took the fleet out of Hampton Roads on December 15, 1907, and although illness soon after the start confined him to his cabin for a greater part of the way, he retained command until San Francisco was reached, and